



CPP Information Bureau

COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE PHILIPPINES
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On the release of political detainees by the GRP and of prisoners of war by the NPA

Statement of Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal
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The Communist Party of the Philippines lauds the Macapagal-Arroyo government's order to release 73 political prisoners. We hope this is an initial step towards the eventual release of all political prisoners including Donato Continente and Juanito Itaas.

The release of all political prisoners is a just demand of their families, human rights groups and church organizations.

As we have said a month ago, the NPA stands ready to release prisoners of war PCI Abelardo Martin and Army Maj. Noel Buan. Their release is being considered not in exchange for the release of political prisoners but for political considerations (to support the peace talks, for instance) and on humanitarian grounds.

The Communist Party and New People's Army are not imposing conditions on the possible release of the prisoners of war, just as they did not impose conditions on the release of prisoners in the past. Nonetheless, as in the past, the mechanisms for the release of Buan and Martin must be arranged through negotiations. The NDFP negotiating panel has the sole authority to receive requests for the release of the NPA's prisoners of war and to negotiate for an orderly and safe process of release.

The NPA unit that has custody over Martin and Buan stands ready to release them once it receives an order to this effect from the NDFP National Executive Committee and in accordance with arrangements arrived at through negotiations.

Negotiations are necessary to ensure the safety of the prisoners as well as their custodians. The NDFP and GRP must agree on the manner in which the prisoners are to be released, and this includes the need for a suspension of offensive military operations for a defined period in the general area where the prisoners are to be released.

For the prisoners' sake, Macapagal-Arroyo must renounce the militarist stance of refusing to negotiate for their release as Estrada did in the past. Such a refusal can only lead to a delay in the prisoners' release. As we have already stated in the past, the NPA stands ready to keep them in custody for as long as necessary.